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THE EMIGRANT'S GUIDE TO THE GOLD MINES.

THREE WEEKS

IN THE

GOLD MINES,

OR

ADVENTURES WITH THE GOLD DIGGERS OF CALIFORNIA

In August, 1848.

TOGETHER WITH

ADVICE TO EMIGRANTS,

WITH FULL INSTRUCTIONS UPON THE BEST METHOD OF GETTING THERE, LIVING, EXPENSES, ETC., ETC., AND A

COMPLETE DESCRIPTION OF THE COUNTRY,

With a Map and Illustrations.

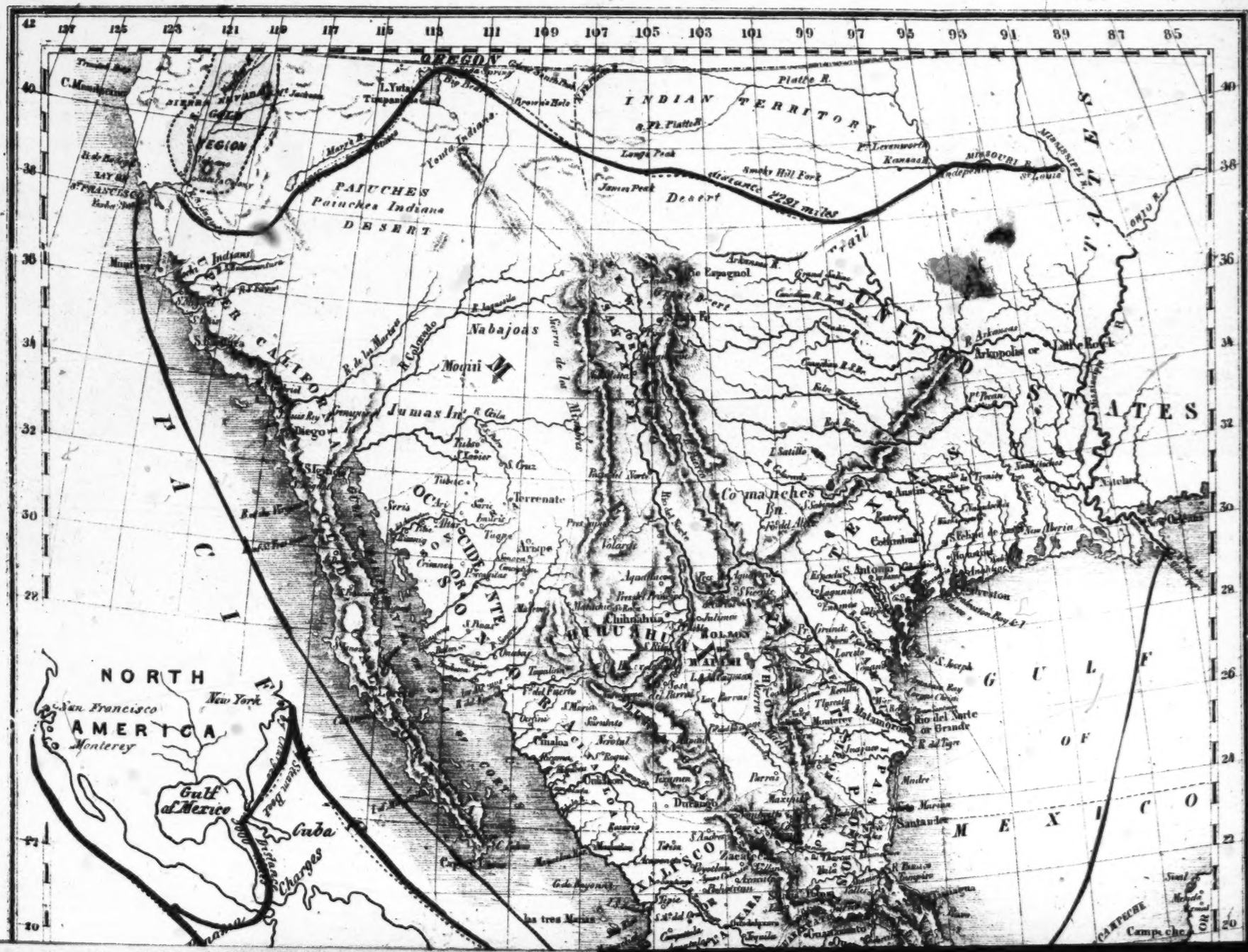
BY HENRY I. SIMPSON,

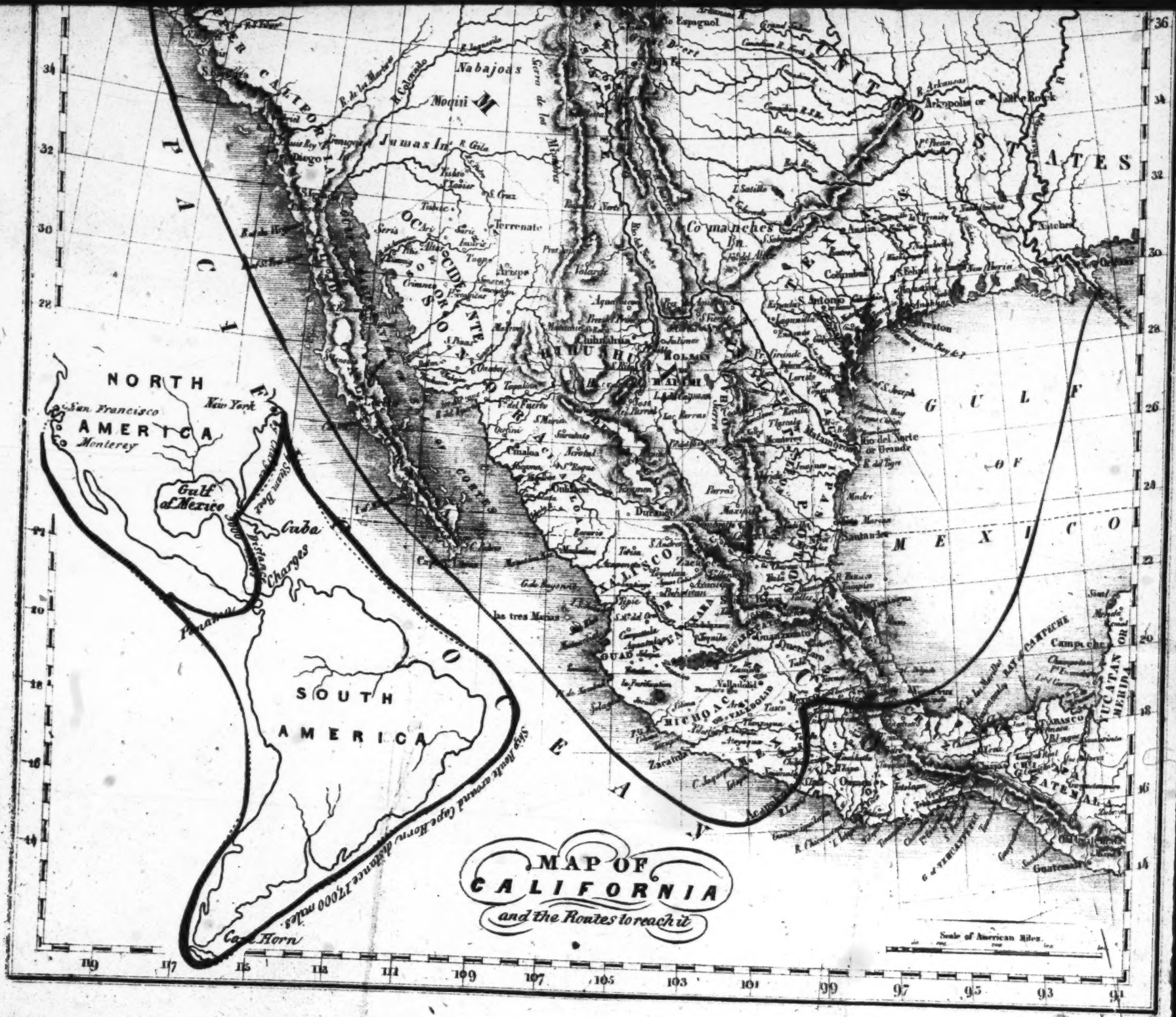
OF THE NEW YORK VOLUNTEERS.

NEW YORK:

JOYCE AND CO., 40 ANN STREET.

1848.


OREGON
INDIAN TERRITORY
Platte R.
Ft. Platte R.
Ft. Leavenworth
Kansas R.
Missouri R.
Missisippi R.
St. Louis
Ohio R.
Rocky Hill Fork
James Peak
Long's Peak
Distance 2291 miles
Desert
PAIUCHES
Paiuches Indians
DESERT
rail
road
UNITED STATES
Arkansas R.
Arkopolis or Little Rock
Ft. Towson
Red R.
Rio Espagnol
Grand Desert
Nabajoas
Moqui
Sierra de los Mimbres
R. Colorado
R. de los Mansos
Gila R.
Sierra Blanca
Comanches
Bn.
Austin
Columbus
New Iberia
Natchez
Orleans
Galveston
Galveston Bay
Houston
S. Antonio
Laredo
Matamoras
Rio del Norte or Grande
R. del Tigre
Monterey
Presidio
Chihuahua
Durango
Mazatlan
Santander
Tampico
Vera Cruz
Campeche
Gulf of Mexico
MEXICO
PACIFIC OCEAN
CALIFORNIA
OCCIDENTE
ORIENTE
SONORA
CHIHUAHUA
DURANGO
XALISCO
NUEVO LEON
COAHUILA
TEXAS
NORTH AMERICA
New York
San Francisco
Monterey
Gulf of Mexico
Cuba
Charges
Yucatan
Tres Marias
Sierra Madre
Sierra de los Mimbres


MAP OF
CALIFORNIA
and the Routes to reach it
NORTH
AMERICA
SOUTH
AMERICA
PACIFIC
OCEAN
ATLANTIC
OCEAN
GULF
OF
MEXICO
UNITED
STATES
MEXICO
Gulf of Mexico
Cuba
Charges
Panama
Cape Horn
San Francisco
New York
Monterey
Nabajoas
Moqui
Comanches
Scale of American Miles.

PREFACE.

The recent discovery of the wonderful and seemingly inexhaustible gold mines in our newly acquired territory of California, surpassing in the richness of their treasures, even the fabled El Dorado, has created, in this age of enterprise, an excitement rarely equalled at any epoch of the world; and the call for information with regard to the nature, geographical position, and so forth, of the country where such a harvest of wealth is being gathered, has caused both readers and publishers to catch at every thing tending to throw light upon the subject.

We are happy, at this juncture, to be able to offer to the public a most interesting narrative of one who spent, as it will be seen, some three weeks in the very midst of the gold region, becoming himself a "gold digger," and familiar with every thing connected with the mines, and personally acquainted therewith. Circumstances, to which it is unnecessary to refer, induced Mr. S—— to enlist in the regiment of Col. Stevenson, where he served honorably, and on his release was, like every one else, led by the accounts, which put all California into a fever, to visit the gold region. It will be seen, from his style, that he is a person of information, and one whose accounts may be depended upon.

We have also caused a geographical account of the country, a history of its resources, inhabitants, &c., together with an accurate description of the different routes and means of getting there, expenses, and so forth, to be prepared by a gentlemen recently familiar with the country, and drawing full information from the most authentic sources. This account may be depended upon as the most useful and correct that has come before the public.

MAP OF CALIFORNIA, AND THE WAY TO GET TO IT.

The map, which accompanies this book, contains not only a view of the whole of California, with the gold regions indicated thereon, but also of Mexico and a large portion of the United States. There is also a map appended, showing the routes via Cape Horn, and also the route across the Isthmus. The route across the country from Independence, Missouri, is also plainly indicated, as is the route across Mexico from Vera Cruz to Acapulco. This map may be fully depended upon for its corectness. Price 12 1-2 cents.

Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1848, by JAMES BITHELL, in the Clerk's Office of the Southern District of New York.

THREE WEEKS IN THE GOLD MINES,

OR

Adventures with the Gold Diggers

OF CALIFORNIA.

MONTEREY, (California,) Sept. 17th, 1848.

Dear M——:

* * * * * * *

I now proceed to give you, according to your request, some account of this wonderful country. Like every body else in this region, I caught, of course, the gold mania, and as soon as the disbanding of my regiment, and my release from professional duties would allow me, I set to work making my preparations for the journey to San Francisco, which place we had heard was pretty well deserted by its male population. Our company consisted of four persons, with one of whom (Charley H——) you are acquainted.

Having arranged our business we set out on the 16th for San Francisco, in high glee, for adventures in El Dorado. I say in high glee, for, to tell the truth, the almost fabulous accounts which were flowing in on us day by day, and the constant proofs in confirmation, which seemed enough to defy incredulity, had excited quite a fever in my imagination. I experienced another proof, in this journey, of what the wisest philosophers have sometimes asserted—that there is far more pleasure, if not more happiness, in pursuit than in possession; for I am satisfied that the possession of wealth, "boundless as wish could name," would not have excited in my mind half the keen and vivid sensations of delight, which anticipation fed my thoughts with.

On the 21st we arrived at San Francisco, from whence our road, as far as San Jose, a distance of twenty leagues, lay through the beautiful valley of the Puebla; and certainly a more beautiful country never spread its panorama to the human gaze! On either side lay stretched out before us the flower-decked prairies, where every loveliest hue seemed blended and interwoven. The soft breezes were laden with perfume; and the meandering streams that wandered here and there, with clear, transparent waves bubbling and sparkling in the sunshine, added the music their low, sweet murmurings to the scene!

The country is one of extreme fertility of soil, and excellently situated for settlement; indeed, I could not but think to myself of the fable of the old man, who, when dying, told his sons of a hidden treasure upon the farm he left them, whereby they were induced to dig so industriously that the soil, improved by culture, grew so fruitful as to realize their hopes of wealth by its own products. "If," said I to myself, "these golden discoveries were to prove delusive, the needy adventurer should bless a deception which led him to a home in such a paradise!"

How perfect would have been the picture to my mind, if a few cheerful habitations and well-ordered farms had given life to the scene; but all was solitude, if not a waste. The old dirty-looking, half-ruinous mission house of Saint Clara was the only thing in the shape of improvements which we met with; from this the road leads to the San Joaquin, which we had to ford. The country between this stream and Sutter's fort was also very rich, and peculiarly well adapted to cultivation; but alas! not a human being was to be seen! Mexicans, Americans, and Indians, were all gone! The gold fever had taken them off! At Sutter's we found several mechanics busily employed, but not, as might be supposed, at their respective trades; each seemed driving at the same object, contriving something or other to wash gold in.

The principal mines are situated some fifty miles above the fort, but they commence much nearer, extending up this branch of the river Sacramento, which is called the American Fork, among the various ravines and streams issuing from among the hills which stretch out from the base of the great mountains of the Sierra Nevada. In this direction we proceeded, and after journeying some hours, one of our party stopped to dip some water from a little limpid brook that ran gurgling past, and lo! at the bottom of the cup we found sparkling grains of gold mingled with the sand. This was our first evidence that we were within the boundaries of El Dorado, and here was Pactolus running over its golden sands at our feet! It was near dark when we arrived at our first halting-place, which was the lower washings, and for many miles we had ridden over gold, quicksilver, and iron mines, the richest on earth! while the country through which we travelled was so smooth and level that a private carriage might be driven the whole journey as easily, almost, as along Broadway.

I could not but remark the entire desertion, on this journey, of every other occupation, for the purpose of digging gold, as if men had forgotten its mere conventional value. Along the whole route where the habitations of men were to be found, they were now abandoned. Mills were lying idle, cattle and horses were running riot among the luxuriant wheat fields, which were allowed to go to waste, and houses were vacant.

We found at Sutter's something more like life and business: cargoes were discharging, carts were hauling goods to the stores, and everything was carried on with energy and activity. In Captain Sutter we found an intelligent, hospitable, and noble-hearted man, who, by his liberal conduct towards new comers, has won the esteem and regard of all who have come in contact with him.

Before proceeding to describe our first impressions and adventures on our arrival, I must give you some little account of the discovery of the mines. When I say the discovery, I allude, of course, to the recent one, for I doubt not that they were in some measure known both to the Indians and Spaniards many years ago; and indeed Father Jose, the priest whom I have mentioned as having become so friendly with in Monterey, assured me that they were known to that indefatigable and persevering order, of his own religion, the Jesuits, many years ago; but that the impossibility of turning their information to the benefit of the Church, induced them to keep it a secret. It is also known that an expedition was fitted out by the Governor of Sonora during the last century, which, owing to various discouragements, failed. The occasion of the present knowledge of these mines was as as follows, I believe: Capt. Sutter feeling the want of timber badly, and having found that a fine species grew upon the hills that gradually rise from the Sacramento plain, stretching back to the mountains of the Sierra Nevada, determined to avail himself thereof; and for this purpose employed a Mr. Marshall to erect him a saw-mill on the south branch of the American Fork, convenient to the timber. This was done last winter; and a dam and race were also constructed. It was found, however, when the mill was about to be set in operation, that the race was

in some respects too narrow. To save labor the full current was turned into the race for the purpose of washing it out. This was accomplished, and a good deal of mud and gravel was necessarily deposited at the foot of the race. After the water was drawn off, Mr. Marshall, in walking down the race, one day, observed some shining particles mixed with this deposit, which he examined and found to be gold. He immediately informed Capt. Sutter of his discovery; but, as laborers were scarce, and Capt. S. had a grist mill building which it was very desirable to finish, they agreed to keep the matter a secret until the mill was finished; well knowing that if it was divulged sooner their hands would leave them to hunt for gold. The matter, however, leaked out, and spread like wild-fire, and the first adventurers having met with much success, the excitement became so intense that men abandoned their business, their families and their homes, and flocked thither in crowds, not even taking the precaution to think how they were to subsist in the meantime. This reckless avidity for wealth caused considerable suffering, in some instances; and but for the generosity and kindness of Capt. Sutter some would have gone well nigh to starvation, while they were gathering golden treasures. The chief mode employed in obtaining the gold, is by washing it from the earth, and many were, in a great measure, baffled for the want of some utensil for that purpose, and the oddest and most amusing articles were brought into use. The most enormous prices were paid for anything that would at all serve the purpose; an old tin pan that you would throw from your kitchen as worthless would have commanded double its weight in gold. I have heard of a Yankee who was persuaded to carry a cargo of warming-pans to the West Indies, and finding himself hoaxed, pretended that they were designed for sugar ladles, and thereby sold them out at a large profit, making good his speculation; and if some lucky wight could have happened "down that way" with a load of tin ware he might have bid adieu to peddling for ever after. As I have said, some strange devices were resorted to. There was many a *crown* (of a hat) sacrificed for gold, and one genius, who had a considerable *understanding*, when his hat was gone, pulled off one of his old Conestoga boots and went to work with that. The baskets, however, which the Indians make, soon supplied the deficiency, and were found to answer the purpose well. Within three months after the discovery, it is estimated that from three to four thousand men were employed.

But I must return to my own personal narrative from this long digression. Though it was nearly dark when we arrived, we could see that the sides of the hills were covered with tents of bushes, and various other sorts of temporary habitations. We found much hospitality and good feeling, without a symptom of jealousy at new comers; indeed, there is but little need of anything like selfishness, for the field of enterprise seems almost inexhaustible. We managed to make ourselves as comfortable as circumstances would permit for the night; but fatigued as we were, we did not get to sleep until a late hour, for we found many of the laborers, notwithstanding the fatigue which they must necessarily have felt after their day's labors, quite ready to gossip away a few hours with a new comer, and to exhibit the glittering heap which was the reward of their day's work. It may seem strange that not many of these men work for themselves, though, of course, the mines are equally free to all, it appearing that they prefer the certainty of wages to the profits of their individual enterprise, though some of the employers have cleared, as we were told, as much as $10,000 in a week!

It was late when we arose next morning, and we found the habitations all around us deserted. The sun had risen above the lofty hights of the Sierra Nevada, and was pouring down a flood of rich light upon the hills and valleys around, scattered among which the busy hundreds were digging, delving, and scooping for the shining particles of yellow earth, which man's conventions have rendered the type and representative of wealth and property!. There they were, of mixed colors and races—the swarthy Mexican, the seemingly passionless and phlegmatic Indian, and the energetic, persevering, go-ahead descendant of the Anglo-Saxon—all filled with the same eager, burning desire *to gain*! In far less time than it would take to write them down, there passed through my mind a crowd of moral reflections. You would scarcely thank me however, for inflicting them upon you.

Perhaps a brief description of the country may give more point to my nar-

rative from henceforth. The gold region, as it is called, and so far as the discoveries and operations have yet gone, lies in the Sacramento valley, which comprises a district lying between the Sierra Nevada on the east, and a range of mountains on the coast, stretching across the bay of San Francisco southward, and forming a valley about five hundred miles long. The two rivers of Sacramento and San Joaquin rise in the opposite extremities of this valley, and both empty into the bay of San Francisco, so that the valley, though in reality one, is divided according to the names of the rivers, that on the south being called the valley of San Joaquin, and that part on the north the valley of Sacramento. The two rivers receive numerous bold rivers and streams from the Sierra Nevada, and are navigable for a considerable distance; flowing towards each other, they enter the bay of San Francisco, making a continuous water communication from one end of the valley to the other. With the valley of San Joaquin we have nothing to do at present, though from all accounts it is a most beautiful and fertile region. The valley of Sacramento, where our interest now lies, as well as that of San Joaquin, is connected with the head of the bay of San Francisco by a delta some thirty miles in breadth, through the flowery meads of which, as I have already described, the first part of our pleasant journey lay. This delta is part of the fertile valley of San Jose, in which there was formerly a very flourishing mission establishment. The road from San Francisco lying on the south side of the bay, we were compelled to cross the San Joaquin, as I have already described, and proceeding around the head of the bay of San Francisco, struck the Sacramento at Sutter's fort, which is situated on the east side of the river. About three miles therefrom is located the town of Suttersville.

I suppose you think me somewhat tedious with my descriptions, but I wish to give you an idea of the country and the localities, before proceeding with my personal adventures. I shall go on, however, in my own desultory way, from which, perhaps, you may gather a more satisfactory idea of the country, than if I was able to give you a strict geographical description. You will understand, now, that we were about thirty miles above Sutter's fort, on the American fork of the river, or at what is called the lower washings. My companions were eager to get to work at once, but for myself I determined to make a further survey, and learn more of the country, and Charley agreed to stick by me for a day or two at least. After despatching a hasty meal, which we took from our wallet, we set out to wander among the different parties who were scattered around at their labor. They were all cheerful and active, some with tin pans, others with wooden bowls and Indian baskets, which latter were generally the best, as the dirt and water escaped easily through the interstices. There were a number of Indians who were dressed in strange fantastic guise: instead of the breach clout, which used to be their chief article of the toilet, gaudy calicoes, bright colored handkerchiefs, and strips of red cloth were showily exhibited about their persons. The first party, with whom we came up, consisted of an old Indian with his squaw, and a youth about fifteen; they seemed to be working on their own account, though most of the Indians work by the day for some employer, who furnishes them with food, and pays a regular per diem—sometimes as much as twenty dollars a day, but more generally at the rate of an ounce and a half of gold, the current rate of which is from $10 to $12 per ounce. When we came within sight of this party, they were in a short deep ravine, very busily employed digging with small *machetes*, or Spanish knives: and as soon as they perceived us, they looked up with some vexation of manner, as though they feared we were coming to interfere with their rights of discovery. I may here remark, that a nice regard is almost always had for such rights. A party finding a good bed of gold, are seldom or never interfered with by others—at least the immediate vicinity of their operations is not trespassed upon. As an evidence of this feeling of natural justice, I learned that there was, at the mill of Capt. Sutter, a fine bank of deposit which had not been touched, out of respect to the rights of the captain, who of course has no real ownership in the matter. The Indians soon became satisfied that we had no intention of trespassing, and began their work again, the old fellow jabbering away in bad Spanish in reply to our inquiries. He had about his person, in an uncouth looking buckskin pouch, from six to eight ounces of gold, as I should judge, which he exhibited with some exultation. While we were engaged with the old man, the boy, who had progressed some few yards

ahead in his work, uttered a sudden "ugh!" which is the Indian expression of wonder. We all turned towards him, and saw him holding up, with an expression of irrepressible delight, a large lump of gold incrusted with earth and gravel, which seemed as big as a man's fist. The old fellow rushed towards him with quite an un-Indian-like eagerness, and taking it from his hand, commenced rapidly cleaning it of the dirt and gravel, which he accomplished with peculiar skill, and in less than a minute exhibited to us a lump of apparently pure gold, which I should judge weighed at least six or seven ounces. We all examined it closely, and with open admiration. Whether it was a craving of avarice that seized my heart, or because I admired the specimen as one of the finest I had seen, I will not pretend to determine; but, as it was, I felt a strong desire to possess the piece. I suppose my feelings were legible in my countenance, for the old Indian looked knowingly into my eyes, and then, after a few words in his own language with his squaw, he took the gold in his hand and proffered it to me, taking hold, at the same time, of a bright scarlet sash which I wore around my waist, thus evidently offering a trade. My sash was a fine one, and though worth by no means the intrinsic value of the gold, would perhaps have sold for much more in that region, for the Indians had been known to gratify their fancies at much more exorbitant prices: it was not this, however, that made me hesitate, but rather that it seemed like speculating upon the ignorance of the savage.

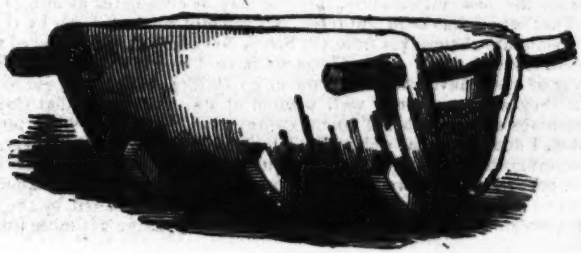
"Take it, Harry," said Charley to me.

"I do not like to impose on the old fellow, Charley," said I.

"Pooh, some less scrupulous person will sell him a few yards of printed calico for it; so it amounts to the same thing in the end."

Doubtless the Indian thought that our hesitation arose from a desire to enhance my demand for the sash, for he held a few minutes longer consultation with his squaw, and then commenced undoing his pouch, as if he intended to offer an additional price. I shook my head, however, to indicate that he should stop, and undoing the sash, I gave it in exchange for the gold. Certainly vanity is a sweet morsel to the human heart; even the habitual stoicism of the savage yields to its magic influence. No sooner had the old man obtained possession of the coveted treasure, than both his wife and son gathered around him, forgetting entirely their work in extravagant admiration of the gaudy plaything they had purchased so far beyond its value. We left them to their enjoyment, and proceeded on.

I would here remark that where the laborers do not enter the employ of some company, they generally form a club, five or six of them working together, and dividing the profits. This affords them many advantages, and is a strong proof of the necessity of society in human affairs. A company thus organised have their own establishment, their tent, their horses and cattle, forming a domestic establishment, which is left during the day under charge of one of the number, who receives an equal portion of the profits of their labor, while he is acting in the capacity of cook, housekeeper, and general factotum for the rest of his comrades. It was a party of this kind, consisting of five individuals, all Americans, with whom we next came up. They were engaged in washing with a machine of such peculiar and original structure that it quite took my fancy, and of which, from memory, I have endeavored to give you a pencil sketch, so that you may patent it, if you please, in the United States, and come out here and make your fortune with it.



You will see that it is very much like a baby cradle, which is the name they give it, only it is about eight feet long, on rockers, and open at the foot; at the head it has a sieve of wicker work, and is rounded at the bottom, and has three stout cleets nailed across. There were five men at work with it. One was shovelling up the earth close to the bank of the river, another was carrying it and throwing it into the top of the machine, while a third gave it a rocking motion, a fourth dashed water from the river over the earth, and the fifth attended the machine generally. The sieve caught the large pieces of rock gravel and gold, while the water, washing off the earth, left the greater part of the gold mixed with sand, is left in the bottom of the cradle This is drawn off by augur holes into a pan, and dried in the sun, when the sand is separated by blowing it off.

They greeted us very kindly, and after we had watched their work for awhile, they inquired if we had come to work, and made us a proposition to join their party, as they said their machine would work more than they could well feed it with, and that they had to pay the tentkeeper of another tent to attend to their domestic establishment, which was not half attended to. Charley and myself respectfully declined, but our other companions, after a little negotiation, took on with the party. One of them was requested to return to the tent, which was described and directions given him, while the other was set to work.

We remained nearly an hour with this party; watched with eagerness their proceedings, and received from them much information as to the means of finding gold, and the general localities of the immediate region, thereabouts. After bidding adieu to our recent comrades, and wishing all imaginable sorts of good luck, Charley and I set forward on our adventures.

After passing numerous parties, we arrived at Captain Sutter's mill, where, as I have already remarked, gold was first found, in the afternoon. We did not linger here long, but determined to proceed to a small stream called Weber's creek, upon which we understood that there was a large party engaged with much success. We, therefore, by directions which we received at the mill, crossed over to a small stream which empties into the American fork a few miles below the mill, and following a pretty well-beaten track, arrived a little after dark at the washings of Sunol and Co., which are on Weber's creek. These gentlemen employ about thirty Indians, and pay them principally in merchandise of various kinds. Mr. Sunol received us with much hospitality, and insisted upon entertaining us for the night, which we accepted.

We watched the operation, of receiving and weighing the gold, with much curiosity. After the business of the evening was over, and provisions had been dealt out to the hands, which he is compelled to provide, though at a very fair profit, as is the case in regard to all necessaries, the gold, amounting to several pounds, for the day, it seems, had been a successful one, was deposited in a canvass bag, and merely locked up in a wooden desk. It appears, however, as I have before remarked, that there is no fear of dishonesty, gold being too easily found for men to injure their consciences by stealing it. By the way, is not this experience of human nature a conclusive argument against the natural depravity of man, and a proof that dishonesty is generally the offspring of want?

We were seated to quite a good supper, which was very welcome, and enjoyed much the conversation of our host, who was quite communicative. We learned from him many interesting anecdotes and adventures which had occurred among the gold diggers, and also gained much information as to the nature of the country. From the best information, the gold may be considered as almost inexhaustible. That which has been gathered is evidently washed down by the streams which precipitate themselves from the Sierra Nevada, and it is believed to exist on the eastern slope as well. The Mormons have found it on the Great Salt Lake, and many of them have left California to go thither, which they certainly would not do if they were not pretty well assured of its existence at that place. Even these washings seem capable of almost unlimited working; and when they shall be exhausted, I doubt not that rich and incalculable mines will be discovered.

The information which Mr. Sunol gave us, in regard to the best places for finding the gold, confirmed what we had previously heard, and what after experience also taught us; these were the gullies or ravines which are washed by the rains and mountain streams. We were told that from a small ravine not more than seventy

yards long, and some six feet wide, upwards of $12,000 worth of gold had been gathered in an incredible short space of time, and on the subsequent morning, when the place was pointed out to us, we saw a number of similar ravines which were yet untouched. We heard of some persons who, after laboring on shares with others for a week or two, have received for their share, at the rate of $50 a day! It only needs to show how plentiful gold was, to mention my adventure of the morning, when I have no doubt that I could have taken all the old Indian had, for a sash that only cost me $15 when new, and which was not worth more than half the money. Instances of even greater sacrifices than this were related to me as common.

After listening with curiosity and astonishment to the accounts of our host for an hour or two, we retired to rest, our beds consisting of our own Mexican blankets, which we brought with us, and the soft side of the floor in a shed where goods were stowed. We arose early the next morning, and after a hurried meal, went down to the place where the men were at work. There were some forty odd of them, mostly Indians; many of them had waded out nearly up to their waists, with their pans and baskets full of earth, which they were washing by dipping them into the stream, and draining them alternately. You have, enclosed, a little sketch of the scene which, among others, I have indulged my fancy in making.

* We might easily have made an engagement with this company, but it did not comport with my purposes to do so, though I began to think that, perhaps, it was selfish in me to drag Charley H—— along through my wanderings, when a fair opportunity offered for employment; so I mentioned the matter, and advised him accordingly, but the good fellow would not hear to it.

"De'il a bit, Harry, will I leave you; we'll go further, and begin on our own hook when we find a good spot, and employ some of these yellow skins ourselves."

This, however, we were not in a fix to do, for we had not the means or stores. However, as we were pretty well off for adventurers, I thought we might join some small party to advantage; so I said no more of the matterm, but determied to proceed on, at least to a washing about six or seven miles above on the same steam, where, I was told, a large number of people were engaged, some in the bed of the

stream, but mostly in the small side valleys and ravines which led into it. These latter were said to be very rich, as in fact has been generally found the case.

After thanking our courteous host for his hospitality, in return for which he would accept nothing else, we started, following the stream, and by mid-day reached our destination. We there found, as we had been led to expect, hundreds of people engaged busily, both in the water and the ravines. The scene was decidedly the most stirring and life-like we had yet encountered. Scattered along the brow of a hill which rose with a gentle slope to the westward, was a perfect little village of tents—many, nay most of them made with rude boughs and bushes. Horses, cattle and *children* were to be seen among them, for a large portion of the gold diggers who had families brought them with them. Several camp keepers, whose duty it is to look out for the interests of the party to which they were attached, take care of their property, cook their meals, &c., were also seen moving about, and thither we directed our course. Almost the first person whom we saw, chanced to be an old acquaintance whom I had met often at Monterey. He was a mechanic from Connecticut, by the name of Holmes, a keen, smart, enterprising Yankee, and yet a very good fellow withal. He received us cordially, proffered his services to direct us in anything he could; and when he learned our determination to stop awhile and work, he was quite delighted, and informed us that he belonged to a party of four only, industrious stout fellows, and proposed at once that we should join them, as it would make a complete party.

Holmes was just about making preparations, when we arrived, to carry the party some dinner, and he invited us to join in the meal. Dismounting, and stripping our horses, we stowed our effects away at their camp, and tethered our animals with those of the party. Leaving everything in charge of an old Spaniard, who, though too feeble to endure the labor of digging and washing, was nevertheless both faithful and useful as a camp-keeper, and whom the party had employed at liberal wages for that purpose, we set out on foot, with our new companion, for the diggings of his party, which were about a half a mile off in a ravine on the other side of the stream.

We were received with warm greetings, and as soon as Holmes mentioned his proposition to them, it was at once received with favor, and our bargain soon concluded, without the intervention of lawyers, deeds, seals, and all that sort of trumpery by which a man is more often tempted to evade than compelled to adhere to his contract. While despatching their hasty meal, the party made some alterations in their arrangement by which Charley was to stay and work, while Holmes and I went out *prospecting*—that is, hunting for new and richer veins, which plan is always adopted when the number working together is large enough to allow it, as they find a saving in the operation, because they are not then compelled to leave a district which is becoming exhausted for a richer one, on anything like an uncertainty, but can always have a new field ready chosen. I had noticed, when I first came among the gold diggers, that there seemed an air of gaiety, not to say levity, about them—an elasticity of spirits—the fruit, doubtless, of exultation which ever accompanies successful pursuit. The company into which I had now fallen caused me still further to remark it. Never was there a more joyous, free spirited set of men. During the ten or fifteen minutes which they employed eating their meal and canvassing their plans, you might have taken them for a set of gay youths on some party of pleasure, so eager did each one seem in listening and uttering his own thoughts at the same time.

The meal being finished, the party set to work, earnestly, again, while Holmes prepared to accompany me on a *prospecting* tour. He took with him a light pick-axe and a canvass bag, which was slung over his shoulders, and bade me follow. Instead of going directly up the stream, he ascended towards the hills, and made a circuit in the direction of a piece of broken ground much higher than the level on which we were at work.

"See here, Harry," said he, "our people are all at work in the bottoms, and the ravines where the gold has washed down, and it is true that pays very well; but I have believed all along, and now I am disposed to try if I am right, that there are veins hereabout, if we could find them, which would yield three or four times as much as we are able to get by the means we now employ."

"But are they not, most probably, too difficult of access, in the heart of the

mountains, perhaps, where expensive machinery would be required to reach them?" answered I.

"Oh, yes! doubtless such mines exist; but from the size of pieces which have been found imbedded in the ravines, and the large quantity in the streams, I am of the opinion that there is better picking much easier to get at and much nearer, than in the heart of the mountains. You see yonder broken ground to the right, which is higher, a good deal, than where we stand? Well, look closely at it, and you will perceive it is the spur of that range of hills, and has been evidently cut up by the washing of floods. Now I have had my eye on that spot some days. Several men have been there, I know, and report nothing of consequence to be found; but I am determined to try it my way; so come, if you will, and we will go and give the ground an overhauling, at any rate."

"Agreed," said I, and we made our way, as fast as possible, in the direction indicated. On our arrival, Holmes set very earnestly to work, examining every ravine, gully and bank. I followed on, assisting him as well as I could. For several hours we were busily and assiduously engaged; my companion in the meantime grew rather taciturn. Our success was not much; in fact, it seemed to me that the whole experiment was a failure, for though we found two or three isolated pieces of gold, one of which weighed an ounce or upwards, yet there appeared no deposit to work upon.

The assiduity with which Holmes worked, and his faith in our ultimate success, not only prevented any remonstrance on my part, but inspired me, also, with confidence in his proposition in regard to the nature of the ground we were examining, and prospect of finding something to repay us. Night, however, came on, and still the indications were unfavorable.

"Harry," said Holmes, "with a long-drawn sigh; "if you'll stick by me, we will succeed yet: I know my theory is right, but the boys will be sure to laugh at me to-night—yet I am coming right back to this place to-morrow, if I have to throw up my contract with the company."

"They certainly will not require that, even though you should throw away a day," said I.

"I do not think they would, and I'll try once more beforehand. If they are dissatisfied, I will give up my share so long as I fail, but I will not desert this place until I am satisfied, and I advise you to stick by me even if we have to break off."

Both the earnestness of his manner, and the plausibility of his reasoning, made a strong impression on me, and I pledged him my support.

When we arrived at camp, we found our party all in. They were full of spirits, notwithstanding the fatigues of the day, during which they had been rather more than usually successful. The old Spaniard had a very good supper prepared, and when we came up they were just ready to dive into it. I found Charley in great glee, and the company gave him much credit for the industry and success with which he worked.

We fell to upon the supper, with a right good will and a hearty appetite. Right cheerful was the group collected around that blazing fire of pine knots. How wild and spirit-stirring were the conjectures in which they indulged! Yet the strange reality which was around us confirmed visions which would, under any other circumstances, have seemed the brain-heated phantasies of madmen.

Our companions were all men of intelligence and education, as well as practical sense, and the exhiliration of their spirits, under the circumstances, tended to produce some bright scintillations of real wit and humor. Holmes was considerably rallied on his want of success and his obstinate adherence to his notions about the broken ground.

"He's a modern Midas," said one jokingly.

"As how?" demanded another.

"Why everything he touches turns to gold."

"Oh! no," added a third, "the likeness is in regard to certain appendages connected with the organ of hearing."

"Wrong again," said a fourth; "there is an organ which the phrenologists call firmness, which is peculiar to the long-eared tribe."

"About the crown of the caput?" asked the first speaker.

"Oh! you mean Midas was a king," interposed I, "and Holmes is the prince of good fellows."

I feared he might not bear the railery well, but I was mistaken. He stood fire like a trooper. When, however, we were about to retire, he declared his intention of prosecuting his search the next day, and offered, if unsuccessful, to forego his share of the day's work. This, however, they would not listen to, but told him to go ahead in his own fashion, and as the place they then worked did not appear to fail much, perhaps he would have several days to continue his explorations. We then retired to rest; and I assure you slumber, with a buffalo robe for my bed, a saddle for a pillow, and my Mexican blanket for a coverlid, was as sweet and refreshing as ever I found it on the downy couch of luxury! Bulwer makes one of his characters exclaim—

"Ah! what glorious prophets of the future
"Are youth and hope."

And truly they seemed to have transported my spirit through many a glorious and gorgeous scene of future promise that night—the first since I had began, in earnest, to realize the golden harvest, whose inexhaustible treasures imagination seemed incapable of comprehending.

"Gold Diggers' Encampment.—See next page.

We arose fresh and keen in the morning. Our sleep had been grateful, and we felt buoyant as the breeze that played around our brows. Daylight was breaking in purple streaks above the mountain tops, and the busy hum of the stirring miners was heard when we awoke. Old Jose had our breakfast ready, and by the time it was despatched, and preparations were made for setting out, the purple hues had faded in the east before a flood of golden light. The diggers set forth, wishing us all success in our adventures, and Holmes only lingered to make some little preparations, and prepare something to take with us for dinner.

I have not attempted any very accurate account of our accommodations and mode of life, and suppose you can very easily imagine the rough and tumble sort of accommodations we had to put up with. They were, however, somewhat better than those of our neighbors, many of whom, though realizing hundreds of dollars a

day, had no shelter save the little arbors they were enabled to form of the boughs of trees, and nothing but the dearly purchased food they could buy at a depot some eight miles off. Our tent, however, was a marquee, which had formerly belonged to the United States service, which had been procured through the care of Holmes; and there was also a good store of jerked beef, and nearly a barrel of flour, so that we were pretty well off.

Our encampment was rather a picturesque one, and I enclose a rough sketch which I made in the morning while the party were grouped in front consulting the plans of the day before setting out to their labors. It is not a very meritorious drawing, but may serve to give you an idea.

Holmes and I soon set forth on our voyage of discovery.

"Harry," said he, as we were trudging along, each under the burden of a pick-axe; "Harry, I have a presentiment of success to-day; but I want you to understand that if I do not succeed, I quit the company, and go on my own account, for I am willing to risk my time and labor upon the principle I have adopted, that the source of all these washings cannot be far distant, and, when found, will prove the richest the world has ever known. I release you, however, from your promise to go with me, if you wish it; though, if I succeed, you shall reap part of the benefit."

"By no means, old fellow," I replied. "In the first place, I generally keep my word. In the second, I came here on a venture, and your ideas please me; and thirdly, if I backed out now, I certainly should not think of sharing discoveries that I was too faint-hearted to aid you in attempting. I am with you, however, without farther question, as long as you have any hopes."

"Well, old fellow, I do not think you will repent it. My theory with regard to gold is one which might not be admitted by the learned, but which I see no reason to doubt, and there are many to support it. I consider it a primary formation, as in fact are all the metals. It is said they grow, but this, if true, does not destroy my proposition, as increase is the law of nature, in stranger regards than this. But in the upheavings of what are now mountains, after the water receded; whether at the creation or after the flood, I will not pretend to say; for that our continent was once covered with water is evident even to my observation and capacity; and it makes but little difference when the change took place: it seems evident to me that the bowels of the earth being rended by the convulsion, these secret treasures were brought to light. The commotion of the elements, and particularly the fall and flow of water, laid bare the richness of the minerals thus upheaved, and, as I before said, if the crumbs which fall to us in these washings be so profitable, what must be the source from whence they come? Now, it seems to me the main store-houses, as it were, of the mineral are, and must be within reach. Note you the nature of the country. See, from yonder snow-capped peaks, even to where we stand, how gradual is the descent. The same convulsion which threw them upwards, more or less affected the slope that so gradually descends even to our feet; though I admit, that the alluvion, or made soil, which the waters have washed from its sides, has also affected the result we see. Now, as all these deposites are so richly freighted, I argue that the original mines must contain an incalculable amount. What beds of pure metal there must be from which such lumps, as have been found, are rended! Then, I hold that quitting the deposites, and tracing back, we must come to these; and I tell you, Harry, if my plan succeeds, we shall find treasures that shall beggar the descriptions of the Arabian nights."

I cannot say that I was fairly prepared to admit all Holmes said, but I had faith, and that gave me resolution to hazard the venture of my time and labor in his propositions.

It was not long before we reached the field of our day's labors. The indications of the soil gave us easily to understand, that if the elevation Holmes had picked on to begin his explorations was made soil, it was by no means of so recent date as that which was generally worked.

I will not tire you by a minute description of our labors. Indeed, I am afraid my lucubrations are spun out already to an interminable and tiresome length, in your estimation; but I am waiting here, as I have explained to you, and have employed my leisure time in making out this narrative to gratify yourself and friends with regard to the remarkable events which have occurred here, and as to the na-

ture, so far as in my desultory way I am capable of describing it, of the operations of the gold diggers.

We had worked pretty closely all the morning, without much better success than on the day previous, and had laid aside our implements to refresh ourselves with our mid-day meal. On tasting the water in his canteen, Holmes remarked that it was rather warm, and he had no doubt, from appearances, we might easily find a spring thereabouts. We had progressed up the acclivity, some distance further than on the previous day, and several ravines, deeper and more narrow than those we had explored, were near us. Holmes, laying down his things, and bidding me rest quiet, descended one of these, canteen in hand, in search of water. He had not been gone five minutes, when a loud and eager exclamation of surprise startled me, and hurrying to the brink of the ravine, I saw him standing in an attitude of wonder, surprise, and delight that not all the studied efforts of art could have rendered half so commanding, and graceful. There was a bright gleam of triumph in his features, as eloquent as that which lit up the countenance of the old Greek, when, after long years of study, he discovered some great principle of natural science, and, in the ecstacy of his joy, ran howling through the streets "Eureka! Eureka!!" "I have discovered it! I have discovered it!!"

I did not stop, however, to remark this one-tenth part of the time I have taken to describe it, but hurried down to him.

"There!" exclaimed he, "I knew it."

And with a proud air he pointed to a small sparkling stream which ran limpid at his feet. I turned to examine as to what had so affected him, for it could not be the mere discovery of cool water; and truly the sight sent a strange thrill through my own bosom. *The stream, for several yards, apparently ran over a bed of gold.* We both stooped eagerly down, and found that solid gold, mixed with a greyish stone, in which it was embedded, had truly been disclosed by the washing of the water, which, having acted as a sort of a polisher, exposed the glittering heap in all its richness. I ran back for our pickaxes, and we commenced work on it, when we found that the rock gave way much easier than could have been expected—its strength having been impaired, perhaps, by the constant running of the stream—and we obtained some very large pieces of pure gold.

Having satisfied ourselves in this manner as to the facilities of working our mine, we both bent down and quaffed the cool, refreshing waters from a natural chalice of gold!

Holmes gave me my choice to remain, or go immediately back for our party, while he should pick out a desirable location for an encampment. I went back, and when I related to the boys our companion's success, at last, they gave him a loud huzza! and prepared immediately for removal.

In less than an hour our fellows were on the spot, prepared to go to work. We all set to work with a hearty will, and our success was almost incredible. That night we moved our camp, and for five days we worked incessantly. We found, however, that the rock became more solid, the veins more firmly embedded, and finally that our pickaxes would not serve us, as at first. By the sixth day we were pretty well fatigued, and as if from general consent, we paused and held a consultation. Our treasures were produced, which had been secured in buckskin wrappers, bundled up, and put away in a large hole inside the tent, over which a buffalo robe was carelessly thrown, thus making the earth, from whence it came, our money chest.

When it was all spread out before us, the sight was rich indeed! From the quantity, those who had been in the habit of seeing it weighed, declared there must be at least $20,000 worth!

I could see, from the countenances of one or two of my companions, that they were getting anxious to realize their individual shares. Nevertheless, we had worked so well together, that no one liked, I imagine, to propose breaking up the association. At last, it was hinted that we might afford a holiday. Upon this hint, Holmes spoke.

"Come, boys, I see what you all want; we'll divide. You who wish to go down to Sutter's or the bay, can do so. This place won't run away until you have had your holiday over. I would advise you not to abandon it yet, however, unless you are satisfied with fortune's gifts, but procure a few pounds of powder. A little

blasting will give you a rich harvest here yet, though I do not think the mine is as extensive as it appeared at first."

"What are you going to do?" asked they of him. "You give us advice as if you intended to leave us."

"Well, boys, it may not be for good and all, but I am so rich now that I think I can afford to go on my travels. I have an ambition to see that country over yonder," said he, pointing towards the hills which sloped down from the lofty summit of the Sierra Nevada. "However, I promise, if I succeed, that you shall hear from me, if you have not all gone."

The proposition to divide met with universal consent, and one of the boys was despatched to borrow a pair of scales from a company which was working below. In the meanwhile Holmes set to work preparing some provisions in as portable a form as possible. I took Charley aside to find out his intentions, and to propose to him the project, which Holmes and I had, of further explorations. He did not feel disposed, however, to join us, expressed much regret at being obliged to part with me, and wished me all good luck.

The scales soon arrived, our treasures were weighed, and as equitably divided as was possible.

Holmes and I had determined on our course, and after a friendly parting with our companions, we mounted our horses and set forth, leaving them still somewhat undecided as to the course they would pursue. The truth was, I guess, that they were somewhat unwilling to leave labor that had proved so very profitable, and I confess, myself, that I thought it little less than absolute folly; but as I am not *very* avaricious by nature, and felt much curiosity to make further explorations of this astonishing country, and moreover as I knew, if we were disappointed in our search, it would be easy to return, and find *profitable* labor, I decided without reluctance to accompany Holmes.

Our first idea was to find some secure deposit for our gold, which would have been rather cumbersome in our journey; for this purpose we directed our course to Captain Weber's settlement, which was only a few hours' ride off. The captain was at first unwilling to accept the charge, but finally agreed to do so, for which we offered to pay him a per centage, which he generously declined. Indeed, I cannot resist the wish to do passing justice to the character of this excellent man, who, notwithstanding his opportunities as a merchant and a trader to have taken almost unlimited advantage of the circumstances around him, has never been known in one instance to do so, or to depart from the strictest integrity!

We determined to remain all night at Weber's, so as to give us a chance to prepare for the journey by obtaining some little necessaries, and also a good night's rest. I regretted very much not having brought with me a gun, as from the information which we obtained, it seemed the country above, to which we were going, abounded with game, which would be a great convenience in regard to provisions. We were luckily able to supply this want, having an opportunity to purchase a very good hunting rifle, and a pound of Dupont's powder from a person recently arrived, for the very reasonable amount of $350 worth of gold! Of course we closed the bargain at once. Holmes had determined to follow the main branch of the Sacramento as far as the upper valley, which was some hundred and thirty or forty miles. He had been familiar with one of Freemont's men, and had a pretty good knowledge of the country.

Having made all our arrangements, we set forth the next morning in excellent spirits. Time, and the limits of my narrative, which has already grown voluminous, will not permit me to give you an accurate description of every day's journey. We found the slope of the Sierra Nevada one of the most beautiful countries imaginable; numerous bold streams, gushing from the mountains, poured their tributary waters into the Sacramento; many of which would afford beautiful locations, as well as water power sufficient, for factories, mills, &c. Inexhaustible quarries of fine stone were to be seen, timber, and beautifully arable land; in a word, nature, in her most liberal mood, seemed to have formed this country as, even independent of its mineral wealth, the most desirable habitation of man. She seems to have designed it as a rebuke to avarice, saying as it were: "Lo! of what use is the yellow dross which I have flung at your feet, when the true riches of life, the fruits and luxuries ye seek, are so liberally bestowed?"

We found wild cattle and game plentiful. Scarce a day passed that we did not or might not have killed a deer, without going out of our way to seek them; we also saw several antelopes, and numerous flocks of quail and waterfowl. We had determined not to commence our search in earnest until we had reached our destination and were on the return, fearful that we might be over tempted to give it up at some good washing or deposit which might present itself. The casual observations which we made, however, convinced us that there was scarcely a stream or a ravine where the precious metal was not to be found. We encamped the first night on a grassy slope, under a wide-spread oak, near which a limpid stream came gurgling and bubbling down from the mountains. On the next morning, we rose fresh and hearty, and proceeded on our way. We had made about fifty miles, as we judged, notwithstanding our stoppages. The first sight which struck us the next morning, while journeying on a little after sunrise, when its beams had rended and scattered the veil of mist that overhung the valley, was the Shasti peak with its snow-capped summit far reaching towards the heavens. That we had not seen it before was owing, I presume, to the want of a favorable position, as it is visible at certain points much farther down the valley. It was thither that we were making our way, and it now became our guide.

We arrived at the base of this mountain on the afternoon of our third day. It is situated in the forks of the stream, rising out of a dark and gloomy forest of heavy timber. The face of the country seemed to have been gradually changing for the last ten or twelve miles, becoming more heavily timbered, and the road, ascending, as it were, gradually into an upper region. The stream, too, dashed along with increased rapidity, evidently descending from a much more elevated portion of country. We made our encampment on a bed of hard dry sand, some rods back from the river, in which our now practised eyes could detect the sparkling mixture of gold. Gathering some wood, we built a fine fire, and prepared to cook some venison which I had shot that morning.

After despatching a hearty meal, we sat down quietly to rest ourselves for the evening, and consult over our plans, having tethered our horses a little distance off, where there was some good grazing. It was agreed that we should spend the morrow in the vicinity, and return on the next day, taking several choice locations which we had marked for examination in our way.

We were up early in the morning, breakfasted on the remains of the venison, and, mounting our horses, forded the river at a rather rugged passage, and plunged into the forest, through which we roamed for several hours. Its magnificent growth, and the solemnity of its gloomy depth, were awe-inspiring to a degree. We made a circuit, I suppose, of ten or twelve miles, and struck the western fork of the river five or six miles above their junction. The stream here was very rapid, dashing over a rocky bottom, having apparently cut its way through deep clefts in a sort of gorge to the valley. We secured our horses, and set to work examining its bed on foot. The eyes of my companion sparkled with anticipation as we discovered evidences of the metal.

"Harry," said he, "we shall find something here."

We labored for several hours, picking up a very fair quantity of gold, which we noticed was in longer, thinner pieces than usual, and offered more decided evidence of having been recently torn from its bed. Holmes was a little ahead of me, and was examining a cleft which the water in the flood season had washed out, but which was now dry. I heard him call me in a low, unexcited voice, and answered carelessly, for I was picking up some fine specimens.

"Come, Harry," said he again: and I left my occupation to go to him. When I got up with him he was holding in his hand a piece of gold about as large and thick as my double hands outspread; while with a quiet, triumphant air, he poiated to a bed he had cleared away, where gleamed the richest treasure the world ever saw! The flake which, with his small pickaxe, Holmes had peeled off, was as nothing to those which, bedded in stone and compact gravel, lay on each side of the ravine or gully which ran almost parallel with the river, a very small stream only trickling through it now; though, as I have said, it was evidently washed by the high tides.

We immediately set to work, and built us a temporary arbor of bushes, on an eligible location, about twelve yards back from the stream, making a camp our-

selves, and hunting as good pasturage as we could for our horses. It was the middle of the afternoon by the time our arrangements were finished, and we concluded to hunt for the rest of the evening, that we might lay in provisions. We were successful in killing a fine buck, which we cut up and brought in.

The next morning we set to work in earnest. If I could describe to you accurately our success, day by day, it would, even after all you may have heard on this subject, seem incredible. But my time grows short, as I have just heard that my folks are nearly ready to start. Suffice it for the present, that we worked for ten days, living on venison, which we found abundant, and that with our imperfect instruments we dug upwards of $50,000 worth of gold! Finding that we had truly struck upon the most astonishing treasure, which, as yet, was unknown, and might be kept so from all others, we determined to proceed to the coast, and obtain proper implements, as well as the assistance of our old companions. We put up our treasure in the deer hides which we had preserved for the purpose, packed our horses and set off after scattering the vestiges of our recent encampment as well as we could. We avoided, on our return route, the settlements and diggers, and arrived in four days at San Francisco, where we were unable to procure what we wished. Here we found Charley, who told us the company had scattered, and would hardly come together again. He was delighted, however, to join us, and prepared to go back at once with Holmes, while, according to agreement, I have come on here to procure a supply of necessary implements, and employ two or three good trusty hands, which I have done at $30 a-day, when at work.

As I said, we are now ready to start. I would, old fellow, you were with us. Come out and gather a fortune. I have already thirty thousand dollars, and intend, God willing, to come home with what will do me for life, and enable me to live like a Nabob. If you come, and I have left California, you will hear of me from Don Jose Gomez, near the plaza, in Monterey. He is an old Spanish merchant, and my agent now; or I will leave you a letter in the post-office at San Francisco. Once more I say come!

* * * * * * * * * *

Yours ever,

H. I. S.

Description of California.

MONTEREY.

This city was first settled by the Spaniards in the year 1770, and during their jurisdiction over the country, and subsequently, while under the Mexican government, it has been held as the capital and the seat of residence of the governor. I am told that, originally, a small group of buildings, with a church, comprised the whole town, or *presidio*, as the Californians call it, which was garrisoned by a small detachment of soldiers, and that it was many years after the first settlement of the country before any more edifices were constructed. Recently, through the introduction of emigrants, and the retirement of a great portion of the military from the service, a gradual extension has gone on to the formation of its present limits. Its population does not, I should think, exceed fifteen hundred or two thousand whites; and the Indians, though once numerous, have dwindled away to a much less number. The general occupation of the inhabitants is agriculture and rearing cattle, the better portion of them possessing *ranchos*, which are located about in the neighborhood. Their subsistence is obtained from these places, and the town is, consequently, divested of all appearance of cultivation, for hardly a garden of any description is to be found in the place. The harbor, here, is quite inferior to that of San Francisco, but it is well sheltered from the south-east gales, which, during the rainy season, are the prevailing and most dangerous winds. As a commercial place, Monterey has generally been the most important, from its having a greater circulation of specie than any other port on the coast. San Francisco, however, is much its superior in the value of its various productions and the amount of its yearly exportations. Though I have been supplied with ample information as to the exports, imports, duties, &c., of this place, and other statistical knowledge, it would, perhaps, be of little importance in a work like the one you contemplate. I will, therefore, pass on to the more important city (at present, especially in its connection with the gold mines of the Sacramento,) of

SAN FRANCISCO.

San Francisco has wonderfully improved since the *annexation* of this country to the Union. An American population has flown into it; lots, which heretofore were considered almost valueless, have been sold at high prices; new houses have been built and are in progress; new commercial houses have been established (among others, our friend, Frank Ward, of New York, has opened a business in connexion with William M. Smith); hotels have been opened for the accommodation of the travelling and business public; and the publication of a newspaper called the Californian has been commenced. Such is the go-ahead energy of our people, wherever they may be.

I cannot give you any very correct idea of the population of this country. Where a population is so scattered as that of California, it is almost impossible to make an estimate. I, therefore, refer the curious in this respect to the tables of Capt. Wilkes, which, as far as the population prior to the immigration of the Americans goes, will answer very well for the present day, though made a few years ago.

CHARACTER OF THE PEOPLE.

The Californian men are generally indolent and addicted to many vices, caring little for the welfare of their children, who, like themselves, grow up unworthy

members of society. Yet, with a vice so prevalent among the men, the female portion of the community, I must do them the justice to say, seem not to have felt its influence; and perhaps there are few countries in the world where, in proportion to the number of inhabitants, can be found more chastity, industrious habits, and correct deportment, than among the women of California. This is rather surprising to me when I consider the want of distinction observed between those of virtuous and those of immoral habits, for it is not unusual to see at the fandangos and other public assemblages the most perfect familiarity between the two classes. This often misleads strangers, who are apt, in consequence, to form incorrect opinions. I think there can be no doubt, however, that in time, when the country becomes more settled, a necessary distinction will prevail among the various classes, and society will be found more select, as in countries of higher civilization.

FECUNDITY—MODE OF DRESS.

The fecundity of the white people in this country is extreme. It is very rare to find a married couple with less than five or six children, while there are hundreds who have from twelve to fifteen. Very few of them die in their youth, and in reaching the age of puberty are sure to see their grandchildren. The age of eighty and one hundred has always been common in this climate. Most infirmities are unknown here, and the freshness and robustness of the people show the beneficial influence of the climate; the women in particular have always the roses stamped on their cheeks. I think that consumptives in the States would find it quite as beneficial to come here as to go to Madeira, the south of France, or any part of Italy.

The dress worn by the middling class of females is a chemise with short embroidered sleeves, richly trimmed with lace; a muslin petticoat, flounced with scarlet, and secured at the waist by a silk band of the same color; shoes of velvet or blue satin; a cotton *reboso* or scarf; pearl necklace and earings, with the hair falling in broad plaits down the back. Others, of the higher class, dress in the American style, and instead of the *reboso* substitute a rich and costly shawl, of silk or satin. There is something graceful in the management of the *reboso* that the natives alone can impart, and the perfect non-chalance with which it is thrown about them and worn, adds greatly to its beauty. Very few of the men have adopted our mode of dress, the greater part adhering to the ancient costume of the past century. Short clothes, and a jacket trimmed with scarlet, a silk sash about the waist, *botas* of ornamented and embroidered deer skin, secured by colored garters, embroidered shoes, the hair long, braided and fastened behind with ribbons, a black silk handkerchief around the head, surmounted by an oval and broad brimmed hat, is the dress almost universally worn by the men of California, so far as my observation has extended.

MODE OF TRAVELLING.

The universal mode of travelling, here, with both males and females, is on horseback; the latter generally ride with a person behind them, who guides the horse. Old men, from their firm manner of riding with their legs clinging to the sides of their horses, seem almost to have grown to them. Children of not more than three or four years of age ride, two or three together, on one horse, and appear as secure in their seats as the old men who have lived all their lives in the saddle. The young commence their lessons in horsemanship thus early, and when despatched on some errand by their parents, the two most expert riders seat the youngest between them, and go tearing across the country without the least apprehension, not unfrequently with a bullock's hide dragging over the ground behind them. Both young and old are passionately fond of riding, and rarely go from one house to another, no matter how short the distance, except on horseback. Many take their meals in the saddle, and the poor animal is fortunate if he gets either food or drink till late at night, when his master quits his back for his bed, and retires to repose. You have probably heard of the rapid manner in which Col.

Freemont crossed California on horseback, and were no doubt much astonished at such fast travelling; in fact, it is almost incredible unless you have explained to you the mode by which it is accomplished. A gentleman who starts upon a journey of one hundred miles, and wishes to perform the trip in a day, will take with him ten fresh horses and a *vaguero*. The eight loose horses are placed under the charge of the *vaguero*, and are driven in front at the rate of ten or twelve miles an hour, according to the speed that is required for the journey. At the end of twenty miles, the horses which have been rode are discharged and turned into the *cabellada*; and horses which have not been rode, but driven along without weight, are saddled and mounted, and rode at the same speed, and so on to the end of the journey. If a horse gives out from inability to proceed at this gait, he is left on the road. The owner's brand is on him, and if of any value, he can be recovered without difficulty. But in California no one thinks of stopping on the road on account of the loss of a horse, or his inability to travel at the rate of ten or twelve miles an hour. Horse flesh is cheap, and the animal must go as long as he can, and when he cannot travel longer, he is left, and another horse is substituted.

GAMBLING.

During the evenings I frequently visited the several public places (bar rooms) here, and looked on while men and women engaged promiscuously in the game of *monte*, which is the national game of the Spanish race, but is far inferior, in my estimation, to the *faro* which fascinates so many of your young men to their destruction in the city of New York. Gambling is a universal vice in California. All classes and both sexes participate in its excitements to some extent. The games, however, whenever I have been present, have been conducted with great propriety and decorum, so far as the native Californians are concerned. The loud swearing and other turbulent demonstrations generally proceed from the unsuccessful foreigners. I cannot but observe the contrast between the two races in this respect. The one bear their losses with stoical composure and indifference—the other announce each unsuccessful bet with profane imprecations and maledictions. Excitement prompts the hazards of the former—avarice the latter. The Indians are inveterate gamblers, and those who have been so fortunate as to obtain clothing, frequently stake and part with every rag upon their backs. The game which they most generally play is carried on as follows: Any number which may be concerned in it seat themselves cross-legged on the ground in a circle. They are then divided into two parties, each of which has two champions or players. A ball or some small article is placed in the hands of the players on one side, which they transfer from hand to hand with such sleight and dexterity, that it is nearly impossible to detect the changes. When the players holding the balls make a particular motion with their hands, the antagonist players guess in which hand the balls are at the time. If the guess is wrong, it counts one in favor of the playing party. If the guess is right, then it counts one in favor of the guessing party, and the balls are transferred to them. The count of the game is kept with sticks. During the progress of the game, all concerned keep up a continual monotonous grunting, moving their bodies to keep time with their grunts. The articles which are staked on the game are placed in the centre of the ring.

CLIMATE.

In climate, Upper California varies very much. On the coast range it has as high a mean temperature in winter as in summer. The latter is, in fact, the coldest part of the year, owing to the constant prevalence of the northwest winds, which blow with the regularity of the monsoon, and are exceedingly cold, damp and uncomfortable, rendering fire often necessary for comfort in midsummer. This is, however, but seldom resorted to; and many persons have informed me that they have suffered more from cold at Monterey than in places of a much higher latitude.

The climate thirty miles from the coast undergoes a great change, and in no part of the world is there to be found a finer or more equable one than in the valley of San Juan. It more resembles that of Andalusia, in Spain, than any other, and none can be more salubrious. The cold winds of the coast have become warmed,

and have lost their force and violence, though they retain their freshness and purity. This strip of country is that in which the far-famed missions have been established. It extends beyond the pueblo of San Juan, or to the eastward of Monterey, but is of no great extent, being only about twenty miles long by twelve wide.

It is seldom so cold in the settled parts of California as to congeal water. I never saw any snow resting on the ground there, and only saw ice two or three times, and then not thicker than common window glass.

The only rains incident to the country fall during the months of December, January, February and March, which constitute the winter; at other times rain is very rarely known to fall. Perhaps for one-third of the four months before named, the clouds pour down their torrents without intermission; the remaining two-thirds afford clear and delightful weather.

During the wet season the ground in many parts becomes so thoroughly saturated with moisture, particularly in the valley of the Sacramento, that, by the aid of copious dews to which the country is subject, crops may be raised without the trouble of irrigation, though its general aridity constitutes the greatest objection to Upper California. I have been told by a person resident there at the time, that during the year of the visit of the U. S. Exploring Expedition, no rain had fallen; and from every crop having failed, the inhabitants had been living upon their cattle. The cattle suffered almost as much as the crops, and large numbers of them died from starvation. On this account, the inhabitants had forborne to kill their cattle for hides, believing it to be a great loss to do so, as the weight was so much depreciated as to pay little more than the labor of slaughter and preparing for market.

The thermometer at any season of the year rarely falls below 50°, or rises above 80°, and for salubrity I do not think there is any climate in the world superior to that of the coast of California. I was in the country somewhat over a year, exposed much of the time to great hardships and privations, sleeping often in the open air, and I never felt the first pang of disease or the slightest indication of bad health. On some portions of the San Joaquin and Sacramento rivers, where vegetation is rank and decays in the fall, the malaria produces chills and fever, but the attacks are generally slight, and yield easily to medicine. The atmosphere is so pure and preservative along the coast, that I never saw putrified flesh, although in midsummer I saw dead carcases lying exposed to the sun and weather for months.

GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES.

It is presumed that the reader is familiar with the leading geographical features of this country, and therefore we shall not say much about them. Upper California is divided by the Sierra Nevada into two parts. The eastern portion, lying between the Rocky Mountains on the coast, and the great range of the Sierra Nevada, comprehends an area of about 250,000 square miles, and saving the region around the Great Salt Lake in the northeast corner, and a few green spots along the flanks of the western mountains, is a howling desert of burning sands and bald mountains, covered with evidences of volcanic action. It comprehends five-sixths of the territory of California, as acquired from Mexico. The only white settlement within its limits, is the Mormon colony near the Great Salt Lake. The Great Basin is surrounded by mountains on all sides, and the rivers which flow into it from the mountains empty into lakes, the waters of which are evaporated in the sun, as a substitute for an outlet to the sea, or the streams are absorbed by the sands of the desert; as, for instance, Mary's River, which, after a course of 300 miles, suddenly sinks into the sands, its waters as thick and bitter as bitumen, from the impregnations of its volcanic trail.

The western division of California lies west of the great range of the Sierra Nevada, and between it and the Pacific ocean, and is the only part of California with which the army, navy, and settlers from the United States have had anything to do.

THE SIERRA NEVADA.

This sierra is part of the great mountain range, which, under different names and with different elevations, but with much uniformity of direction and general

proximity to the coast, extends from the peninsula of California to Russian America, and without a gap in the distance through which the water of the Rocky Mountains could reach the Pacific ocean, except at the two places where the Columbia and Frazer's River respectively find their passage. This great range is remarkable for its length, its proximity and parallelism to the sea coast, its great elevation, often more lofty than the Rocky Mountains, and its many grand volcanic peaks, reaching high into the region of perpetual snow. Rising singly, like pyramids from heavy timbered plateaux, to the height of fourteen and seventeen thousand feet above the sea, these snowy peaks constitute the characterizing feature of the range, and distinguish it from the Rocky Mountains and all others on our part of the continent.

That part of the range which traverses the Alta California, is called the Sierra Nevada (Snowy Mountain)—a name in itself implying a great elevation, as it is only applied, in Spanish geography, to the mountains whose summits penetrate the region of perpetual snow. It is a grand feature of California, and a dominating one, and must be well understood before the structure of the country and the character of its different divisions can be comprehended. It divides California into two parts, and exercises a decided influence on the climate, soil, and productions of each. Stretching along the coast, and at the general distance of 150 miles from it, this great mountain wall receives the warm winds, charged with vapor, which sweep across the Pacific ocean, precipitates their accumulated moisture in fertilizing rains and snows upon its western flank, and leaves cold and dry winds to pass on to the east. Hence the characteristic differences of the two regions—mildness, fertility, and a superb vegetable kingdom on one side; comparative barrenness and cold on the other.

West of the Sierra Nevada, and between that mountain and the sea, is the second grand division of California, and the only part to which the name applies in the current language of the country. It is the occupied and inhabited part, and so different in character—so divided by the mountain wall of the Sierra from the Great Basin above—as to constitute a region to itself, with a structure and configuration—a soil, climate, and productions—of its own; and as northern Persia may be referred to as some type of the former, so may Italy be referred to as some point of comparison for the latter. North and south, this region embraces about 10 degrees of latitude—from 32 degrees, where it touches the peninsula of California, to 42 degrees, where it bounds on Oregon. East and west, from the Sierra Nevada to the sea it will average, in the middle parts, 150 miles; in the northern parts 200—giving an area of above one hundred thousand square miles. Looking westward from the summit of the Sierra, the main feature presented is the long, low, broad valley of the Joaquin and Sacramento rivers—the two valleys forming one—five hundred miles long and fifty broad, lying along the base of the Sierra, and bounded to the west by the low coast range of mountains, which separate it from the sea. Long dark lines of timber indicate the streams, and bright spots mark the intervening plains. Lateral ranges, parallel to the Sierra Nevada and the coast, make the structure of the country and break it into a surface of valleys and mountains—the valleys a few hundred, and the mountains two to four thousand feet above the sea. These form greater masses, and become more elevated in the north, where some peaks, as the Shasti, enter the regions of perpetual snow. Stretched along the mild coast of the Pacific, with a general elevation in its plains and valleys of only a few hundred feet above the level of the sea—and backed by the long and lofty wall of the Sierra—mildness and geniality may be assumed as the characteristic of its climate. The inhabitants of corresponding latitudes on the Atlantic side of this continent can with difficulty conceive of the soft air and southern productions under the same latitudes in the maritime region of Upper California.

The valley of the San Joaquin is about 300 miles long and 60 broad, between the slopes of the coast mountain and the Sierra Nevada, with a general elevation of only a few hundred feet above the level of the sea. It presents a variety of soil, from dry and unproductive to well watered and luxuriantly fertile. The eastern (which is the fertile) side of the valley is intersected with numerous streams, forming large and very beautiful bottoms of fertile land, wooded principally with white oaks (*quercus longiglanda*, Torr. and Frem.) in open groves of handsome trees, often five or six feet in diameter, and sixty to eighty feet high. Only the larger

streams, which are fifty to one hundred and fifty yards wide, and drain the upper parts of the mountains, pass entirely across the valley, forming the Tulare lakes and the San Joaquin river, which, in the rainy season, make a continuous stream from the head of the valley to the bay. The foot hills of the Sierra Nevada, which limit the valley, make a woodland country, diversified with undulating grounds and pretty valleys, and watered with numerous small streams, which reach only a few miles beyond the hills, the springs which supply them not being copious enough to carry them across the plains. These afford many advantageous spots for farms, making sometimes large bottoms of rich moist land. The rolling surface of the hills presents sunny exposures, sheltered from the winds, and having a highly favorable climate and suitable soil, are considered to be well adapted to the cultivation of the grape, and will probably become the principal vine-growing region of California. The uplands bordering the valleys of the large streams are usually wooded with evergreen oaks, and the intervening plains are timbered with groves or belts of evergreen and white oaks among prairie and open land. The surface of the valley consists of level plains along the Tulare lakes and San Joaquin river, changing into undulating and rolling ground nearer the foot hills of the mountains.

The northern half of the valley of Alta California is watered by the Sacramento, which runs down south into the bay of San Francisco, while the San Joaquin comes into it from the southern extremity, flowing westward and meeting the Sacramento in the bay, which is nearly in the middle of the valley.

The valley of the Sacramento is divided into upper and lower—the lower two hundred miles long, the upper about one hundred; and the latter not merely entitled to the distinction of upper, as being higher up on the river, but also as having a superior elevation of some thousands of feet above it. The division is strongly and geographically marked. The Shastl peak stands at the head of the lower valley, in the forks of the river, rising from a base of about 1,000 feet, out of a forest of heavy timber. It ascends like an immense column upwards of 14,000 feet (nearly the height of Mont Blanc), the summit glistening with snow, and visible, from favorable points of view, at a distance of 140 miles down the valley. The river here, in descending from the upper valley, plunges down through a *canon*, falling 2,000 feet in twenty miles. This upper valley is one hundred miles long, heavily timbered, the climate and productions modified by its altitude, its more northern position, and the proximity and elevation of the neighbouring mountains covered with snow. It contains valleys of arable land, and is deemed capable of settlement.

RIVERS.

The Rio Colorado is the principal river in the eastern part of Upper California. It rises in the U. S. territory about lat. 42°, 30' north, interlocking with the head waters of the Columbia, Missouri, Platte, and Arkansas, and empties into the gulf of California, near lat. 32° north. Following its windings, it is some twelve or fifteen hundred miles in length. Owing to the rapidity of its current, and its frequent falls and cascades, the navigation is entirely destroyed, till within about one hundred miles of its mouth, at the head of tide water; from this on no further interruption occurs, and the depth is sufficient for vessels bearing several hundred tons burthen.

The Gila is properly a river of Sonora, though commonly regarded as the northern boundary of that province.* It rises in the Sierra de los Mimbros, near lat. 33° 25' north, long. 106° 15' west from Greenwich, and pursues a west-south-westerly course till it discharges itself into the bay of the Colorado, at lat. 32° 15' north, long. 114° 27' west. Its whole length is about eight hundred miles, for most of which distance navigation is impracticable, with the exception of some forty miles or more at its mouth.

The western part of Upper California is watered chiefly by the Sacramento and its tributaries. This river is formed by the confluence of two large streams which rise in the cascade mountains, properly termed the North and South Forks; the former heading near lat. 41° 43' north, long. 114° 51' west. The South Fork is the stream defining the waggon route from the United States, *via* South Pass. The Sacramento, measured by its windings, is about eight hundred and fifty miles in length. It receives many important auxiliaries above the junction of its two

forks, which greatly increase the violence and depth of its waters. From its mouth it is said to afford a good stage of navigation for crafts of moderate burthen, as high up as three hundred miles,—tide water setting back for one hundred and fifty miles.

Three other rivers flowing from the south-east have their discharge in the bay of San Francisco. These streams are severally called the Rio del Plumas, American Fork, and Tulare or San Joachim.

The del Plumas or Feather river is navigable for boats of a light draft, till within a hundred miles of its head; its whole length is about two hundred and fifty miles. It derives its name from the great abundance of water fowls which congregate upon it at all seasons of the year, so numerous and tame that the natives not unfrequently kill large quantities of them with clubs or stones as they fly through the air. This is the stream on whose banks most of the gold has been found.

The American Fork, or the Rio de los Americanos, is a clear and beautiful stream, about one hundred and fifty miles long, emptying into the Sacramento bay below the del Plumas, and between it and the Tulare. Owing to frequent rapids, however, its navigation is destroyed.

The Tulare or San Joachim is said to be four hundred miles long, and navigable for one-half that distance. It waters one of the most interesting sections of California, and hence is considered next in importance to the Sacramento. This stream affords some of the finest localities for settlements found in the whole country.

Below the bay of San Francisco several other streams find their way into the Pacific, but none of them are navigable to any great extent.

Above the bay of San Francisco, Russian river is discharged into Bodega bay; further on Smith's river empties into Trinidad bay; and two other small streams find their discharge near Point St. George, a few miles below the boundary line between Oregon and California. Smith's river is the largest stream either above or below the bay of San Francisco, and is about two hundred miles in length, though unnavigable.

VEGETABLE PRODUCTIONS.

The soil, as well as the climate of California, is well adapted to the cultivation of all kinds of grain and vegetables produced in the United States, and many of the varied fruits of the torrid and temperate zones can be successfully reared in one and the same latitude. Among the grains, grasses, and fruits indigenous to the country are wheat, rye, oats, flax, and clover (white and red), with a great variety of grapes, all of which are said to grow spontaneously. Wild oats frequently cover immense spreads of bottom and prairie land, sometimes to an extent of several thousand acres, which resemble in appearance the species common to the United States. They usually grow to a height of between two and three feet, though they often reach a height of seven feet. The wild clover of the valleys is much like the common red, and, in some places, is afforded in great abundance. It attains a usual height of two feet and a-half, though it often measures twice that height, standing as thick as it can well grow.

The yield of wheat is remarkable; forty bushels per acre is said to be the average wheat crop, but sixty and even one hundred bushels have been grown where the land is well situated. Mr. Spears, of Yerba Buena, informs me that he once delivered to an active American farmer thirty bushels of wheat for seed, at a time when it was difficult to procure it, under an agreement that he should have the refusal of the crop at the market price. In the July following, he delivered him three thousand bushels, and on its delivery he found that the farmer had reserved six hundred bushels for himself; and this, without estimating the loss from bad reaping and treading out with horses, would give one hundred and twenty for one. This grain generally renders its maturity in three or four months from the time of sowing. From Monterey northward, most extraordinary crops are raised with very negligent cultivation. It is not uncommon to make two, three, and even five crops from only once sowing. The average annual yield is from thirty to fifty bushels from one of seed sown. In one particular instance, in which something more than ordinary care was used, from ten bushels sown three thousand six hundred and fifty-two bushels were harvested.

Indian corn yields well, as also barley, oats, potatoes, beans and peas. The cultivation of vegetables is increasing rapidly, and supplies in these latter articles may be had in abundance and of the finest quality.

Hemp and flax have been tried, and prove congenial to the climate and soil.

It is supposed that rice might be raised in large quantities about the waters of the San Joachine and Sacramento. The immense fresh water marshes about the mouths of these streams are said by travellers to be capable of being turned into fields for the cultivation of this grain at a trifling expense.

The country appears to be well adapted for grapes. Those that have been tried at the missions yield most abundantly; and about two hundred casks (each of eighteen gallons) of brandy, and the same quantity of wine, are made. The cultivation of the grape increases yearly, but is not sufficient for the supply of the country, as large quantities of foreign wines and liquors are imported. It is indeed a curious fact that California consumes more spirits, in proportion to its population, than any other country in the world. Brandy sells for sixty to seventy dollars the cask, or four dollars a gallon, while the price of wine is only eighteen dollars. The wine of the country is miserable stuff, and would scarcely be taken for the juice of the grape. I can't endure it.

There are extensive gardens attached to some of the missions, where may be found oranges, citrons, limes, apples, pears, peaches, pomegranates, figs and grapes in abundance. At the mission of St. Gabriel, they make yearly from four to six hundred barrels of wine, and two hundred of brandy, the sale of which produces an income of more than twelve thousand dollars.

In 1839, the harvested crops of grains in Upper California, amounted to 69,000 bushels of wheat, 22,000 of maize, 3,000 of *frixoles*, 15,000 of barley, and 700 of peas.

Timber is rather scarce, except at intervals along the water courses, and occasional groves among the hills; but along the coast dense forests are frequently found, containing trees of an enormous size.

In the valleys and low-lands, flowers are not unfrequently in full bloom in mid winter, and all nature bears a like smiling aspect.

Amongst the many useful herbs whose medicinal virtues have been discovered by the natives, one in particular is held in high esteem, since it is by them considered a specific for the poisonous bite of the rattlesnake. Its peculiar virtues were discovered not many years ago by an Indian, who seems to have placed the most implicit faith in its powers, for he submitted himself to be bitten by a snake upon the arm. His limbs immediately swelled to an extraordinary size, and the poor native seemed ready to expire, when, taking a small quantity of the herb in his mouth and chewing it, he spat upon the wound, and rubbing this into it with his hand, in a short time entirely recovered. It is said by the Indians, that should any venomous reptile eat of the plant, its death would be instantaneous.

Another of their plants, of very useful properties, heals the most dangerous wound without the accumulation of *pus*, which is not an unfrequent attendant upon the application of balsam. Another, called the "Can-che-la-gua," is found to be excellent in curing the fever and ague, and may be depended upon in any case, no matter of how long standing. It abounds all over the coast, and in the spring, during the season of flowers, its pretty blossoms add much to the beauty of the country.

Tobacco has been recently introduced; and the uniform summer heat which follows the wet season would, in my opinion, make the southern part of the country well adapted to cotton.

Agriculture is in the rudest state. The farming implements, which have been used by the Californians, with few exceptions, are the same as were used three hundred years ago. The plough, which merely scratches the ground, is the fork of a small tree. Other agricultural implements are of the same description. The Americans are, however, introducing the American plough and other farming tools, the consequence of which has already been, to some extent, a revolution in agriculture.

DOMESTIC AND WILD ANIMALS.

The principal product of the country has been its cattle and horses. The cattle are the largest and finest in the world, and the beef is most delicious. There are immense herds of these, and their hides and tallow have hitherto

composed the principal exports from the country. The horses and mules are correspondingly numerous with the cattle; and although the most of them are used in the country, considerable numbers are driven to Lonna, New Mexico and other southern provinces, for a market. They are smaller than the American horses, and I do not think them equal for continuous hard service; but on short trips, for riding, their speed and endurance are truly astonishing. The value of good horses is from $10 to $25; of mares, $5. These prices are, however, now increasing rapidly.

The wild animals of California are the wild horse, the elk, the black tailed deer, antelope and grizly bear, all in large numbers; also, the beaver, otter, hare, squirrel, &c.

BIRDS AND FISH.

I do not think that the country presents strong attractions for the ornithologist. There is not so great a variety of birds as I have seen elsewhere; but what is wanting in variety is made up in numbers. The bays on the coast, as well as the lakes and rivers in the interior, swarm with myriads of wild geese, ducks, swans and other water fowl. Some of the islands in the harbor, near San Francisco, are white with the guano deposited by these birds; and bratloads of eggs are taken from them. The pheasant and partridge are abundant in the mountains. As for the finny tribe, the rivers and sea here are well stocked. Salmon are very plentiful, and also trout, of very large size, in the mountain streams.

CAPTAIN SUTTER'S SETTLEMENT.

Before closing this long, and I am afraid somewhat disconnected and loosely written account of California, I must give the reader some description of Captain Sutter and his settlement, of whom almost every one has heard. Captain Sutter is a Swiss by birth, and was a Lieutenant in the Swiss Guards during the time of Charles X. Soon after the revolution of July he came to the United States, and passed several years in the State of Missouri. In 1839 he removed to California, and obtained from the Government a conditional grant of thirty leagues square, bounded by the Sacramento on the west, and extending as far up the river as the Prairie Buts. The spot he has chosen ior the erection of his dwelling and fortification, he has called New Helvetia; it is situated on the summit of a small knoll, rising from the level prairie, two miles from the east bank of the Sacramento, and fifty miles from its mouth. New Helvetia is bounded on the north by the American Fork, a small serpentine river, which, having a bar near its mouth, no vessels larger than boats can enter. At this place the Sacramento is eight hundred feet wide, and this may be termed the head of its navigation during the dry season, or the stage of low water.

When Captain Sutter first settled here in 1839, he was surrounded by some of the most hostile tribes of Indians on the river; but by his energy and management, with the aid of a small party of trappers, he has thus far prevented opposition to his plans. He has even succeeded in obtaining the good will of the Indians, who labor for him in building houses. He treats them very kindly, and pays them well for their services in trapping and working for him.

Captain Sutter has commenced extensive operations in farming. The extent of his stock amounts to about one thousand horses, two thousand five hundred cattle, and about one thousand sheep, many of which are to be seen around his premises, giving them an appearance of civilization. His buildings consist of extensive currals and dwelling houses, for himself and people, all built of adobes. Labor is paid for in goods.

In his manners, Captain Sutter is frank and prepossessing; he has much intelligence, is conversant with several languages, and withal not a little enthusiastic: he generally wears a kind of undress uniform, with his side arms buckled around him. He has a wife and daughter whom he expects soon to join him.

ADVICE TO EMIGRANTS,

WAYS TO GET THERE.

The Isthmus Route.

THERE are several routes to California, only two of which, however, are feasible with any degree of comfort or economy, and, we may add, safety. The Chagres steamer leaves New York monthly, as also the British West India Mail Steamers, and they reach Chagres on the Atlantic side of the Isthmus in about ten days. Canoes are here employed, and passengers carried thirty miles up, when they are transferred to the backs of mules, and in this way reach Panama in two days, where they will take either a steamer or sailing vessel for San Francisco. The steamers belonging to Aspinwall's line leave Panama on the first of every month, when fairly organized; but for the present they are advertised to leave January 5, February 15, and the 1st of March. After this, they take their regular monthly departure. The distance by this conveyance from New York to San Francisco, is about 5,500 miles, thus set down:—From New York to Chagres, 2000 miles, Chagres to Panama 50, Panama to San Francisco, on the arc of a great circle, 3,440. The whole distance will occupy from 25 to 30 days. The cost of crossing in this way the isthmus from the best sources of information, will not exceed $20, being performed, as we have already stated, by canoes and mule carriage. The former will soon give way to the steamer Orus, which has been purchased to run on the Chagres river. Passengers are in the habit of crossing the isthmus, who take the British line of steamers down the west coast of South America, which seems to establish the feasibility of its being without difficulty crossed. Passengers should provide themselves with the means to guard against contingencies, as they may arrive, from the non-arrival of the steamers at Panama. The greatest difficulty in going by this route will consist in a large amount of baggage; nothing over 150 pounds weight can be carried with safety. The price of passage on our steamers from New York to California, by the above route, first class, is $420. There is a medium class of passengers taken for considerably less, or sailing vessels leaving here for Chagres will take passengers much less. And there is also a third class passage from New York, by way of Panama, in the Orus and Aspinwall's steamers, by which the whole cost is less than $200, viz: $65 to Chagres, $20 to Panama, $100 to San Francisco.

The Cape Horn Route.

The safest route is, doubtless, via Cape Horn. Ships will take passengers from New York city to their destination, at from $300 down to $100—the price, in fact, depends upon the circumstances and on the accommodations offered.

The distance from New York to California, via Cape Horn, is about 17,000 miles, not 19,000, as stated, and will occupy about 150 days, or five months. Vessels generally, bound to the northwest coast, touch in at Valparaiso, Callao, or Panama. The only chance to forward or carry goods to California, is by ships bound direct; and now that there are so many up, freights are not very expensive.

The following is a correct statement of the time, price, and distance, by the two routes above mentioned to California:—

	Price.	*Distance.*	*Time occupied.*
By Panama, - - -	$300 to 420	5,000	30 to 35 days.
By Cape Horn, - -	100 to 300	17,000	130 to 150 „

The difference in the price is from first to second class. The Bermuda steamers, which leave New York on the 13th of each month, touch at Chagres. Their price to that point is ten dollars less than in our own steamers.

Another new route will be opened in a few weeks, through the Isthmus of Tehuantepec in Mexico. The connection is expected to be made by uniting the navigable waters of the Guasacualco to those of the Chimalapa, the former running in the Gulf of Mexico, the latter in the Pacific. The dividing ridge to be cut through is in height 1,375 feet; but the greatest difficulty here will be in securing a conveyance on the Pacific. The terminus of this road is not known by vessels trading on the west coast. The communication with this new route on the Atlantic side will be with New Orleans, principally, and, when completed, opportunities from that city will be frequent.

The Rocky Mountain Route.

The other route is that across the Rocky Mountains and the great desert,—a route which we can by no means recommend. The usual starting point is Independence, on the frontiers of the State of Missouri. The distance is very great; there are deserts to be crossed, mountains to be scaled, and hostile Indians to be encountered. The following is a table of the distances:—

From Independence, Mo., to Fort Laramie, - - - -	672	miles.
From Fort Laramie to "Pacific Springs," (South Pass,) -	311	"
From the South Pass to Fort Bridger, - - - - -	133	"
From Fort Bridger to Salt Lake, - - - - - -	106	"
From Salt Lake to Mary's River, - - - - -	315	"
Down Mary's River to the "Sink," - - - - -	274	"
From the Sink to Truckee Lake, - - - - -	134	"
From Truckee Lake to Johnson's, - - - - -	111	"
From Johnson's to Sutter's Fort, - - - - -	35	"
Total distance from Independence to Sutter's Fort,.....	2091	"
The distance from Sutter's Fort by land, to the town of San Francisco, (via the Pueblo of San Jose,) near the mouth of the Bay of S. F. and five miles from the Pacific Ocean, is	200	"
TOTAL,.....	2291	miles.

Since 1845, many emigrating parties have traversed this region, some of which, during the year 1846, were exposed to much danger and suffering, having been stopped in their progress through the mountains by terrible storms of snow and hail, imprisoned for months in these regions, and subjected to all the horrors of starvation and destitution. The accounts received from the unfortunate sufferers compose a chapter of human misery, for which few parallels can be found in fact or fiction. The following description of the sufferings of one party of unfortunate emigrants, which had been lost among the mountains and imprisoned in the snows, and the horrible and revolting extremities to which they were reduced, is from the "California Star" of April 10th, 1847:—

"A more shocking scene cannot be imagined, than that witnessed by the party of men who went to the relief of the unfortunate emigrants in the California mountains. The bones of those who had died and been devoured by the miserable ones that still survived, were lying around their tents and cabins. Bodies of men, women, and children, with half the flesh torn from them, lay on every side. A woman sat by the side of the body of her husband, who had just died, cutting out his tongue,; the heart she had already taken out, broiled, and ate! The daughter was seen eating the flesh of the father—the mother that of her children—children that of father and mother. The emaciated, wild, and ghastly appearance of the survivors added to the horror of the scene. Language cannot describe the awful change that a few weeks of dire suffering had wrought in the minds of these wretched and pitiable beings. Those who but one month before would have shuddered and sickened at the thought of eating human flesh, or of killing their companions and relatives to preserve their own lives, now looked upon the opportunities afforded them of escaping the most dreadful of deaths, as a providential interference in their behalf. Calculations were coldly made, as they sat around

their gloomy camp-fires, for the next and succeeding meals. Various expedients were devised to prevent the dreadful crime of murder, but they finally resolved to kill those who had the least claims to longer existence. Just at this moment, however, as if by Divine interposition, some of them died, which afforded the rest temporary relief. Some sunk into the arms of death cursing God for their miserable fate, while the last whisperings of others were prayers and songs of praise to the Almighty.

"After the first few deaths, but the one all-absorbing thought of individual self-preservation prevailed. The fountains of natural affection were dried up. The cords that once vibrated with connubial, parental, and filial affection, were rent asunder, and each one seemed resolved, without regard to the fate of others, to escape from the impending calamity. Even the wild, hostile mountain Indians, who once visited their camps, pitied them, and instead of pursuing the natural impulse of their hostile feelings to the whites, and destroying them, as they could easily have done, divided their own scanty supply of food with them.

"So changed had the emigrants become, that when the party sent out arrived with food, some of them cast it aside, and seemed to prefer the putrid human flesh that still remained. The day before the party arrived, one of the emigrants took a child of about four years of age in bed with him, and devoured the whole before morning; and the next day ate another about the same age before noon."

The town of Independence is situated about six miles from the Missouri river, on the southern or left hand side as you ascend it. The surrounding country is undulating, picturesque, and highly fertile. Its population is about one thousand; and in the spring of the year, when emigrating parties usually assemble there, every man seems to be actively and profitably employed. It has been for some years the principal outfitting point for the Santa Fe traders, and will probably so continue. Many of the houses around the public square are constructed of brick, but the majority of the buildings are frames. In the spring, among the busy multitude moving to and fro through the streets, may be seen large numbers of New Mexicans, and half breed Indians, with their dusky complexions and ragged and dirty costumes. They are generally mounted on miserably poor mules or horses, and present a most shabby appearance. Long trains of oxen, sometimes as many as ten or fifteen yokes strung together, and pulling huge tended wagons, designed for some Santa Fe expedition, move about the streets under the directions of numerous drivers cracking their whips and making a great noise. Ox teams seem to be esteemed as preferrable in these journeys to either mules or horses. The average price paid per yoke is $22, which may be considered very cheap. The streets are filled with oxen offered for sale by the neighboring farmers, but few of them are in good condition or well trained; they are mostly young cattle, however, and easily improvable. Young and medium sized cattle should be selected for a journey over the plains and mountains, in preference to the heavy bodied and old; the latter almost invariably become foot-sore, and give out after travelling a few hundred miles.

The Nicaragua Route.

In addition to the various routes we have already mentioned, is one which offers to travellers bound to California, or to any of the ports on the Pacific, as many inducements as any now known. This we allude to, is the isthmus of Nicaragua. The distance from St. Juan, on the Atlantic side, to Raelejo, on the Pacific, is about 156 miles. St. Juan is a town, upon the river of that name, with which we have an extended commerce. This river debouches into lake Nicaragua, which, connected with the river St. Juan, makes the distance travelled by water 120 miles to the town of Leon; from thence to Raelejo, 36 miles, by a good carriage road, over a level country free as is our own from fevers or epidemics. The traveling on the river St. Juan and on the lake is done by canoes, of all sizes, in which merchandise to almost any extent can be carried. The lake is dotted with small islands, many of which are inhabited by a straggling set of half breed Indians, who trade with the boats and travellers bound across the lake.

At Leon there is a population of more than twenty thousand inhabitants, and provisions of every description can be obtained in abundance. When this place is reached, the distance, as we have said, is thirty-six miles to Raelejo, which is on

the Pacific coast, and is celebrated among whalers and merchantmen for the facilities it affords in its splendid harbor and in the excellent provisions, with which it abounds. Vessels trading on the Pacific with the ports on the coast, and the Sandwich Islands, make this town their principal stopping place to recruit and provision, and this is why we recommend persons now going to California to take this route, as the chances of obtaining a passage from Raelejo to San Francisco here are much greater than from Panama or any of the isthmus ports on the Pacific. The probable cost of proceeding to California by this route will not exceed the present prices asked for a passage across the Isthmus of Panama, as the influx at this latter point must render all conveniences of living and travel very scarce, and consequently expensive.

The greatest advantage we see in the Nicaragua route is the ease with which it may be travelled, and the certainty of proceeding with comfort and safety. The country over which you travel by this route, is at all seasons passable; so thickly inhabited that labor is cheap, rendering the conveyance of baggage easier than by any other mode, except by the long and tedious navigation around Cape Horn. Moreover, the country being fertile, provisions are abundant; and if by any chance the traveller should be detained at Raelejo his expenses would be very moderate, with the certainty of always having a sufficiency.

The Acapulco Route.

Another route to the Gold Region is *via* Vera Cruz, city of Mexico and Acapulco on the Pacific. The passage to Vera Cruz is $80, made in about eighteen days. From Vera Cruz *via* Mexico the transit occupies about ten days, at a cost of $75. The portion af the journey between the city of Mexico and Acapulco is performed on horseback. From Acapulco, where the American Mail Steamers are to stop, excepting the first one, the passage is $125, and the distance about 2,000 miles. The cost, therefore, by this route would be $280, and the time occupied about forty days. If the passage from New York to Vera Cruz was made in a steamer the time would be reduced to thirty or thirty-two days.

The Guadalaxara Route.

Another route still, and one which presents some advantages, is to go from the city of Mexico to Mazatlan on the Pacific *via* Guadalaxara. The journey from the last-named place would be made on horseback, and the whole journey from Vera Cruz to Mazatlan performed in about twenty days, at a cost of about $125. When at Mazatlan the traveller is 2,000 miles north of Panama. The cost of passage by the Mail Steamers from Mazatlan to San Francisco is $75. Mazatlan is a place of large business, and there are almost always vessels there by which passage could be obtained up the coast. The cost by this route to San Francisco would be $275, and the time occupied about forty-five days. In companies of ten or twelve Americans there would be no danger of robbery in traveling either of the above-named routes.

MRS. FANNY KEMBLE BUTLER.

[There is now being published, in "The People's Own," an elaborate series of articles entitled "Memoirs of Fanny Kemble Butler," including a brief sketch of the Kemble family, and the causes which led to the decline and fall of the British drama; to which will be added a full and correct account of Mrs. Butler's matrimonial difficulties.]

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